

## CLAIMS:

1. A computer-implemented method for enabling design of a product having a visual effect caused by an additive, the method comprising:

obtaining information relating to the additive; and

providing a representation of the product having the visual effect based on the information relating to the additive.

2. The computer-implemented method of claim 1 wherein the information relating to the additive comprises information relating to a flake material, and wherein the providing comprises providing the representation of the product based on the information relating to the flake material.

3. The computer-implemented method of claim 2 wherein the information relating to the flake material comprises a type of flake material and a concentration of the flake material, and wherein the providing comprises providing the representation of the product based on the information relating to the type of the flake material and the concentration of the flake material.

4. The computer-implemented method of claim 1 wherein the information relating to the additive comprises information relating to a diffuser material, and wherein the providing comprises providing the representation of the product based on the information relating to the diffusion material.

5. The computer-implemented method of claim 4 wherein the information relating to a diffuser material comprises a type of diffuser material, a concentration of the diffuser material, a thickness of the product, and a distance between the product and an object to be observed behind the product, and wherein the providing comprises providing the representation of the product with the object behind the product based on the information relating to the type of diffuser material, the concentration of the diffuser material, the thickness of the product, and the distance between the product and an object behind the product.

6. The computer-implemented method of claim 1 further comprising obtaining information relating to the color of the product, and wherein the providing comprises providing the representation of the product based on the information relating to the color and the information relating to the additive.

5 7. The computer-implemented method of claim 1 wherein the providing comprises at least one of retrieving the representation from a database of representations associated with a plurality of products having visual effects, and computer generating the representation of the product having the visual effect.

10 8. The computer-implemented method of claim 1 further comprising storing the representation of the product having the visual effect, and allowing authorized access the representation of the product having the visual effect.

9. The computer-implemented method of claim 1 further comprising obtaining a request for a physical sample of the product having the visual effect.

15 10. The computer-implemented method of claim 1 further comprising determining ingredients and concentrations for producing the product having the visual effect.

11. The computer-implemented method of claim 1 wherein the product comprises a plastic material.

20 12. A method for enabling design of a product having a visual effect caused by an additive, the method comprising:

obtaining information relating to the additive from a first user at a first computing unit coupled via a communications network to a second computing unit; and

25 providing from the second computing unit a representation of the product having the visual effect for display on the first computing unit based on the information relating to the additive.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein the information relating to the additive comprises information relating to a flake material, and wherein the providing comprises providing the representation of the product based on the information relating to the flake material.

5 14. The method of claim 13 wherein the information relating to the flake material comprises a type of flake material and a concentration of the flake material, and wherein the providing comprises providing the representation of the product based on the information relating to the type of the flake material and the concentration of the flake material.

10 15. The method of claim 12 wherein the information relating to the additive comprises information relating to a diffuser material, and wherein the providing comprises providing the representation of the product based on the information relating to the diffusion material.

15 16. The method of claim 15 wherein the information relating to a diffuser material comprises a type of diffuser material, a concentration of the diffuser material, a thickness of the product, and a distance between the product and an object to be observed behind the product, and wherein the providing comprises providing the representation of the product with the object behind the product based on the information relating to the type of diffuser material, the concentration of the diffuser material, the  
20 thickness of the product, and the distance between the product and an object behind the product.

25 17. The method of claim 12 further comprising obtaining information relating to the color of the product, and wherein the providing comprises providing the representation of the product based on the information relating to the color and the information relating to the additive.

18. The method of claim 12 wherein the providing comprises at least one of retrieving the representation from a database of representations associated with a plurality

of products having visual effects, and computer generating the representation of the product having the visual effect.

19. The method of claim 12 further comprising storing the representation of the product having the visual effect at the second computing unit, and allowing  
5 authorized access to the representation of the product having the visual effect by at least one second user at at least one third computing unit.

20. The method of claim 12 further comprising obtaining a request at the second computing unit for a physical sample of the product having the visual effect from the first computing unit.

10 21. The method of claim 12 further comprising determining at the second computing unit ingredients and concentrations for producing the product having the visual effect.

22. The method of claim 12 wherein the product comprises a plastic material.

15 23. The method of claim 12 wherein the communications network is a global computer network.

24. The method of claim 12 further comprising transferring, from the second computing unit, a module for representing a plurality of products having a plurality of the additives to the first computing unit.

20 25. A system for enabling design of a product having a visual effect caused by an additive, said system comprising:

at least one processor adapted to obtain information relating to the additive; and

said at least one processor adapted to provide a representation of the product having the visual effect based on the information relating to the additive.

26. The system of claim 25 wherein the information relating to the additive comprises information relating to a flake material, and wherein the representation of the product is based on the information relating to the flake material.

27. The system of claim 26 wherein the information relating to the flake material comprises a type of flake material and a concentration of the flake material, and wherein the representation of the product is based on the information relating to the type of the flake material and the concentration of the flake material.

28. The system of claim 25 wherein the information relating to the additive comprises information relating to a diffuser material, and wherein the representation of the product is based on the information relating to the diffusion material.

29. The system of claim 28 wherein the information relating to a diffuser material comprises a type of diffuser material, a concentration of the diffuser material, a thickness of the product, and a distance between the product and an object to be observed behind the product, and wherein the representation of the product with the object behind the product is based on the information relating to the type of diffuser material, the concentration of the diffuser material, the thickness of the product, and the distance between the product and an object behind the product.

30. The system of claim 25 wherein said at least one processor is adapted to obtain information relating to the color of the product, and wherein the representation of the product is based on the information relating to the color and the information relating to the additive.

31. The system of claim 25 wherein said at least one processor is adapted to at least one of retrieve the representation from a database of representations associated with a plurality of products having visual effects, and computer generate the representation of the product having the visual effect.

32. The system of claim 25 wherein said at least one processor is adapted to store the representation of the product having the visual effect, and to allow authorized access the representation of the product having the visual effect.

33. The system of claim 25 where said at least one processor is adapted to obtain a request for a physical sample of the product having the visual effect.

34. The system of claim 25 wherein said at least one processor is adapted to determine ingredients and concentrations for producing the product having the visual effect.

35. The system of claim 25 wherein the product comprises a plastic material.

36. A system for enabling design of a product having a visual effect caused by an additive, said system comprising:

means for obtaining information relating to the additive from a first user at a first computing unit coupled via a communications network to a second computing unit; and

means for providing from the second computing unit a representation of the product having the visual effect for display on the first computing unit based on the information relating to the additive.

37. The system of claim 36 wherein the information relating to the additive comprises information relating to a flake material, and wherein the representation of the product is based on the information relating to the flake material.

38. The system of claim 37 wherein the information relating to the flake material comprises a type of flake material and a concentration of the flake material, and wherein the representation of the product is based on the information relating to the type of the flake material and the concentration of the flake material.

39. The system of claim 36 wherein the information relating to the additive comprises information relating to a diffuser material, and wherein the representation of the product is based on the information relating to the diffusion material.

40. The system of claim 39 wherein the information relating to a diffuser material comprises a type of diffuser material, a concentration of the diffuser material,

a thickness of the product, and a distance between the product and an object to be observed behind the product, and wherein the representation of the product with the object behind the product is based on the information relating to the type of diffuser material, the concentration of the diffuser material, the thickness of the product, and the distance between the product and an object behind the product.

41. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for obtaining information relating to the color of the product, and wherein the representation of the product is based on the information relating to the color and the information relating to the additive.

42. The system of claim 36 further comprising at least one of means for retrieving the representation from a database of representations associated with a plurality of products having visual effects, and means for computer generating the representation of the product having the visual effect.

43. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for storing the representation of the product having the visual effect at the second computing unit, and means for allowing authorized access to the representation of the product having the visual effect by at least one second user at at least one third computing unit.

44. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for obtaining a request at the second computing unit for a physical sample of the product having the visual effect from the first computing unit.

45. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for determining at the second computing unit ingredients and concentrations for producing the product having the visual effect.

46. The system of claim 36 wherein the product comprises a plastic material.

47. The system of claim 36 wherein the communications network is a global computer network.

48. The system of claim 36 further comprising means for transferring, from the second computing unit, a module for representing a plurality of products having a plurality of the additives to the first computing unit.

49. At least one program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying at least one program of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method for enabling design of a product having a visual effect caused by an additive, the method comprising:

obtaining information relating to the additive; and

providing a representation of the product having the visual effect based on the information relating to the additive.

50. The at least one program storage device of claim 49 wherein the information relating to the additive comprises information relating to a flake material, and wherein the providing comprises providing the representation of the product based on the information relating to the flake material.

51. The at least one program storage device of claim 50 wherein the information relating to the flake material comprises a type of flake material and a concentration of the flake material, and wherein the providing comprises providing the representation of the product based on the information relating to the type of the flake material and the concentration of the flake material.

52. The at least one program storage device of claim 49 wherein the information relating to the additive comprises information relating to a diffuser material, and wherein the providing comprises providing the representation of the product based on the information relating to the diffusion material.

53. The at least one program storage device of claim 52 wherein the information relating to a diffuser material comprises a type of diffuser material, a concentration of the diffuser material, a thickness of the product, and a distance between the product and an object to be observed behind the product, and wherein the providing

comprises providing the representation of the product with the object behind the product based on the information relating to the type of diffuser material, the concentration of the diffuser material, the thickness of the product, and the distance between the product and an object behind the product.

5           54.     The at least one program storage device of claim 49 further comprising obtaining information relating to the color of the product, and wherein the providing comprises providing the representation of the product based on the information relating to the color and the information relating to the additive.

10           55.     The at least one program storage device of claim 49 wherein the providing comprises at least one of retrieving the representation from a database of representations associated with a plurality of products having visual effects, and computer generating the representation of the product having the visual effect.

15           56.     The at least one program storage device of claim 49 further comprising storing the representation of the product having the visual effect, and allowing authorized access the representation of the product having the visual effect.

            57.     The at least one program storage device of claim 49 further comprising obtaining a request for a physical sample of the product having the visual effect.

20           58.     The at least one program storage device of claim 49 further comprising determining ingredients and concentrations for producing the product having the visual effect.

            59.     The at least one program storage device of claim 49 wherein the product comprises a plastic material.

            60.     An article of manufacture comprising:

25                 at least one computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for enabling design of a product having a visual effect

caused by an additive, the computer readable program code means in said article of manufacture comprising:

computer readable program code means for causing a first computing unit to obtain information relating to the additive from a first user at the first computing unit  
5 coupled via a communications network to a second computing unit; and

computer readable program code means for causing the second computing unit to provide a representation of the product having the visual effect for display on the first computing unit based on the information relating to the additive.

61. The article of manufacture of claim 60 wherein the information relating to the additive comprises information relating to a flake material, and wherein the providing comprises providing the representation of the product is based on the information relating to the flake material.

62. The article of manufacture of claim 61 wherein the information relating to the flake material comprises a type of flake material and a concentration of the flake material, and wherein the representation of the product is based on the information relating to the type of the flake material and the concentration of the flake material.

63. The article of manufacture of claim 60 wherein the information relating to the additive comprises information relating to a diffuser material, and wherein the representation of the product is based on the information relating to the diffusion material.

64. The article of manufacture of claim 63 wherein the information relating to a diffuser material comprises a type of diffuser material, a concentration of the diffuser material, a thickness of the product, and a distance between the product and an object to be observed behind the product, and wherein the representation of the product with the object behind the product is based on the information relating to the type of diffuser material, the concentration of the diffuser material, the thickness of the product, and the distance between the product and an object behind the product.

65. The article of manufacture of claim 60 further comprising computer readable program code means for causing the first computing unit to obtain information relating to the color of the product, and wherein the representation of the product is based on the information relating to the color and the information relating to the additive.

5 66. The article of manufacture of claim 60 further comprising computer readable program code means for causing at least one of the first and second computing units to at least one of retrieve the representation from a database of representations associated with a plurality of products having visual effects, and to computer generate the representation of the product having the visual effect.

10 67. The article of manufacture of claim 60 further comprising computer readable program code means for causing the second computing unit to store the representation of the product having the visual effect, and computer readable code means for causing the second computing unit to allow authorized access to the representation of the product having the visual effect by at least one second user at at least one third  
15 computing unit.

68. The system of claim 60 further comprising computer readable program code means for causing the second computing unit to obtain a request for a physical sample of the product having the visual effect from the first computing unit.

20 69. The system of claim 60 further comprising computer readable program code means for causing the second computing unit to determine ingredients and concentrations for producing the product having the visual effect.

70. The system of claim 60 wherein the product comprises a plastic material.

71. The system of claim 60 wherein the communications network is a global computer network.

25 72. The system of claim 60 further comprising computer readable program code means for causing the second computing unit to transfer a module for representing a plurality of products having a plurality of the additives to the first computing unit.